

Eleven years later, I was proud to sign into law the zero tolerance legislation that is helping to make it illegal for a person under 21 to drive in any State after drinking any measurable amount of alcohol, no matter what the legal limit is. I say to you, if we win this battle and you want to come back for a lower limit, I'll be glad to stand here with you under those circumstances as well. The "Safe and Sober Streets Act" takes the next step to lower the legal limit to .08 in every State. When Congress passes it I'll sign it, and we'll work hard to pass it.

Today there is something else I'd like to do. I am instructing Secretary Slater to report back to me in 45 days with a plan to make .08 the legal limit on all Federal property, from National Parks to military bases, so that the United States can lead the way in making .08 the law of the land all over the land.

Lowering the legal limit to .08 will not prevent adults from enjoying alcoholic beverages. But lowering the limit will make responsible Americans take even greater care when they drink alcohol in any amounts if they intend to drive.

To people who disregard the lethal threat they pose when they drink and drive, lowering the legal limit will send a strong message that our Nation will not tolerate irresponsible acts that endanger our children and our Nation. We will, meanwhile, continue to do all we can to protect our young people from harm, fighting to keep drugs and guns and alcohol out of our schools and our children's lives, fighting to shield them from the deadly harm of illegal exposure and use of tobacco.

With the steps we take today, we will build on that progress to help to ensure that the lives of Ashley Frazier, Dorothy Dorgan, and thousands of others cut short by drunk driving will not have been lost in vain.

Now, in a few moments I want to ask Ashley's classmates who are here, members of my Cabinet, and the Members of Congress who are here to join me as I sign the Presidential directive on Federal property. But before I do, if you will indulge me, because of the action of the United Nations Security Council with regard to Iraq and because this is the only chance I have to appear before the press and therefore the American people today, I would like to make a brief statement.

The unanimous vote of the United Nations Security Council last night sends a clear message. Iraq must fulfill without obstruction or delay its commitment to open all of the nation to the international weapons inspectors—anyplace, anytime, without any conditions, deadlines, or excuses.

All the members of the Security Council agree that failure to do so will result in severest consequences. The Government of Iraq should be under no illusion. The meaning of "severest consequences" is clear. It provides authority to act if Iraq does not turn the commitment it has now made into compliance.

As the Secretary-General told the Security Council yesterday, Iraq's complete fulfillment of these obligations is the one and only aim of the agreement. No promise of peace and no policy of patience can be without its limits. Iraq's words must be matched by deeds. The world is watching.

Now, I would like to ask Ashley's classmates, the members of the Cabinet, and the Members of Congress, as well as Chief Flynn, would you all join us up here now, and Brenda, please.

*[At this point, the President signed the memorandum on standards to prevent drinking and driving.]*

**The President.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brenda Frazier, mother of Ashley Frazier, who was killed by a drunk driver; Edward Flynn, chief of police, Arlington County, VA; and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

## **Memorandum on Standards To Prevent Drinking and Driving**

*March 3, 1998*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Transportation*

*Subject: Standards to Prevent Drinking and Driving*

We have made progress in improving highway safety through a variety of innovative and aggressive initiatives, including our "Buckle Up America" campaign to increase safety

belt usage and improve child passenger safety, and the formation of a ground-breaking public-private partnership on airbags. We have also taken important steps to reduce the deaths and injuries brought about by alcohol use and driving. In November 1995, I signed into law legislation to help ensure that States adopt "Zero Alcohol Tolerance" laws by October 1998 for young drivers. To date, 46 States and the District of Columbia have enacted such laws.

However, drunk driving remains a serious highway safety problem. Over 40 percent of all motor vehicle deaths in 1996—17,126—were alcohol-related, and nearly 3,000 of these fatalities were young people under the age of 21. Moreover, alcohol-related automobile accidents cost our society \$45 billion every year, not including the pain and suffering endured by the victims.

We must do more to prevent the many tragic and unnecessary alcohol-related deaths and injuries that occur on our Nation's roads. That is why my Administration has called on the Congress to pass legislation helping to ensure that a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 becomes the national legal limit. Research shows that, at a BAC level of .08, drivers are impaired with regard to critical driving tasks such as braking, steering, lane changing, and exercising good judgment. The risk of being involved in a crash increases substantially when drivers have a BAC level of .08 or above. In fact, the relative risk of a driver being killed in a single-vehicle crash at .08 BAC has been estimated to be at least 11 times higher than it is for drivers who have no alcohol in their system. Yet 33 States and the District of Columbia continue to use .10 BAC as the legal limit. It is estimated that if all States were to lower their limits to .08 BAC, there would be 600 fewer alcohol-related traffic deaths every year.

I hope the Congress will enact legislation as soon as possible to help to ensure State passage of .08 BAC laws. Even before the Congress acts, however, we can take action to promote .08 BAC as the appropriate standard across the country, including on Federal property.

I therefore direct you, working with appropriate Federal agencies, the Congress, the States, safety groups, and other concerned

Americans, to report back to me within 45 days with a plan to promote the adoption of a .08 BAC legal limit. Among other things, the plan should consider:

- (1) setting a .08 BAC standard on Federal property, including in national parks and on Department of Defense installations, and ensuring strong enforcement and publicity of this standard;
- (2) encouraging tribal governments to adopt, enforce, and publicize a .08 BAC standard on highways in Indian Country that are subject to their jurisdiction; and
- (3) developing an educational campaign to help the public understand the risks associated with combining alcohol consumption and driving.

**William J. Clinton**

### **Statement on the Decision of Representative Esteban Torres Not To Seek Reelection**

*March 3, 1998*

Throughout his distinguished career in the United States Congress, Representative Esteban Torres has dedicated himself to bettering the lives of his constituents and Hispanic-Americans across the country. Representative Torres has shown true leadership in the area of civil rights and has stood steadfast in an effort to bring our country together amid all of our diversity to build a stronger community.

Congressman Torres has led efforts to provide people with the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. He has set the standard for excellence in public service and his retirement after over 15 years will be a loss felt across the country.

### **Statement on Senate Foreign Relations Committee Support for NATO Enlargement**

*March 3, 1998*

I welcome today's strong endorsement by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for admitting Poland, Hungary, and the Czech